The southern segment of the Keystone XL pipeline would transport toxic Canadian tar sands crude from Oklahoma to Texas refineries, where much of the refined tar sands oil would be exported.

A THREAT TO CLEAN WATER
Tar sands crude is more toxic, more dangerous to transport, and harder to clean up than traditional crude oil. Thick and abrasive, it must be pumped at extreme temperatures and pressures. Because it’s highly corrosive, spills are more likely, and cleanup after an accident is nearly impossible. In 2010, a single rupture sent more than a million gallons of tar sands crude gushing from a pipeline in Michigan. The cleanup effort lasted 18 months and cost $700 million, permanently displacing residents, endangering emergency responders, and resulting in job losses. Residual tar sands oil still poisons a nearly 40-mile stretch of the Kalamazoo River with heavy metals and noxious, cancer-causing chemicals.

This is the reality of Keystone XL southern segment:

- An accident along the southern segment could pollute the Carrizo-Wilcox aquifer, which provides drinking water for 10 to 12 million people, and would leave ranchers, farmers, and businesses in 60 drought-threatened Texas counties, as well as the city of Houston, high and dry.
- The pipeline would cross the Red River along the Texas-Oklahoma border, home to the endangered interior least tern, and would threaten the Neches River, the only river in east Texas that still has abundant wildlife, clean water, and healthy forests.

REFINERIES POISON AN EMBATTLED COMMUNITY
The southern segment will carry tar sands crude to refineries on the Gulf Coast. Refining tar sands crude is an extremely toxic process that will pump more sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds, particulate matter, and heavy metals into the air and water.

- Residents of Port Arthur, TX, already suffer from elevated levels of 12 hazardous air pollutants, including eight cancer-causing agents.
- Children who live within two miles of the Houston Ship Channel—the enormous refining hub and seaport—have a 56 percent greater chance of developing leukemia, and normally rare skin disorders are disturbingly common.
- Tar sands crude will mean even more cancer, prenatal disorders, and respiratory and neurological diseases in communities that already suffer the heaviest burden of oil industry pollution and related disease.
HIGHER OIL PRICES
With increased demand for U.S. diesel and gas exports, oil companies are desperate to move Canadian tar sands crude to Gulf Coast refineries in free trade zones so they can ship refined oil abroad, tax-free, at higher prices.

• TransCanada has told its shareholders that exporting refined tar sands to international markets will increase oil industry annual revenue by up to $3.9 billion. U.S. citizens will pay more for the same fuel, while oil companies pocket the profits.

• It is estimated that the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline will increase the price of gas in the Midwest by 10 to 20 cents per gallon.

THE BIG PICTURE
Tar sands is the dirtiest oil on Earth.

• Producing a single barrel requires four tons of strip-mined earth. If not stopped, mining will destroy an area the size of Florida in Canada’s Boreal forest, the world’s largest remaining intact ecosystem—home to endangered caribou herds, black bears, wolves, songbirds, and waterfowl.

• Tar sands oil creates 20 percent more carbon pollution than conventional oil and contains, on average, 11 times more sulfur, 11 times more nickel, and 5 times more lead, in addition to more arsenic and other toxic heavy metals.

• Importing tar sands crude would perpetuate America’s oil addiction for decades—canceling gains from improving fuel-economy and jeopardizing our transition to a clean-energy economy.

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“A TAR SANDS CRUDE IS THE DIRTIEST OIL ON EARTH AND PUTS AMERICA’S WATER, AIR, AND HEALTH AT RISK. IT’S AN ENVIRONMENTAL NIGHTMARE.”

~ Michael Brune,
Sierra Club Executive Director

A TEXAN FIGHTS FOR HER LAND
TransCanada is brazenly using eminent domain to violate the rights of Texas landowners by forcing its pipeline onto private property. Although this use of eminent domain is legally questionable, TransCanada has relied on high-priced lawyers, threats, and intimidation to strong-arm landowners all along the pipeline route.

Texas landowner Julia Trigg Crawford has been fighting TransCanada’s use of eminent domain—a legal principle that allows a government (in this case, a foreign corporation) to disregard private property rights for projects that serve a larger good.

TransCanada’s profits should not supersede the rights of ranchers to protect their property from catastrophic oil spills. No corporation should be allowed to force American landowners to place their land, water, health, and heritage at risk against their will.